

## PUBLIC MEETING

June 23, 2012

### Public Meeting in the Town Hall of Errol, New Hampshire

Speaker: I'm the guy who started this 6 months ago – I started as I saw what was happening with our town and I also basically believe in America and in freedom (inaudible). I do heartily believe in private ownership of the land. I believe other public ownership of land too but I believe in a way that respects local control and local values and cultures. And one of the things that has bothered me the most about this whole thing is that we're watching a culture disappear. While at the same time, they're going to have a little museum or something up there to show what it was like before they came. And, I'm a hunter, I'm a fisherman and I am a trapper. I make no apologies for that. That's the way I was raised, my father did it, my grandfather. I am also the son of immigrants. On my mother's side they went through the internment concentration camps because they're Polish – alright – I really value freedom. My father valued freedom; I value freedom greatly. I value local control. So I started this because I saw what was starting to happen. My (inaudible) in Wentworth Location was about 70% off which, even though the taxes are fairly low up there, it's still catch as catch can. I really believe what this whole thing is – I think we're going to lose to be honest with you. People are sitting up here have the whole power of the Federal Government behind them. They have the administration who purely tax what they do. Okay. I think this town in this area is going to be sacrificed. At the state graduation, the CEO – former CEO – Arlington Sedow who spoke at his commencement address – he said I am happy to inform you people that by the year 2020 our Federal Government will have purchased over 250,000 acres of land in all of Coos County. I know the guy that was sitting there, he turned and looked at his wife and said that's obviously something screwy. Okay. Now, ....

Speaker: Is this a public meeting or...

Speaker: Yes it will be...

Speaker: Is this for your .... I feel as though (both speaking at once)

Speaker: Sir, I feel I have a right to say something.

Speaker: You do, but so do the rest of us.

Speaker: You are going to.

Speaker: Is this a public meeting?

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: This was called for by what I thought public officials. Not by you.

Speaker: No. It's a public meeting.

Speaker: That's not what's happening.

Speaker: Could you just address what the agenda will be.

Speaker: This was set up so we could address our representatives and our senators with our concerns; because that is the only power ....

Speaker: So why don't they take charge of the meeting instead of having this stuff on it.

Speaker: Alright. This is what we set up. Okay?

Speaker: For you?

Speaker: We settled that – let him have his say.

Speaker: He had his say. Now (multiple speakers) .... We pay a lot of bucks to defend this country; not just hear what your family....

Speaker: Councilor Burton is here. Why don't you guys take charge of this meeting so we can have some... (multiple speakers)

Burton: Thank you. You can blame it all on me. (laughter) Bob Lord came to Senator Gallus, the state senator and I – with some concerns – he collected about a thousand signatures, we in turn, we're state guards – we are not federal people. We are elected by and under the Constitution of the State of New Hampshire, and by \_\_\_\_\_ - I brought along two copies of here; also copies of my duties here and also I just happen to be running for reelection and I noticed some other people out here are running for this – stand up and just say who you are. Larry – Debra Warner –

Warner: Hi – I'm Debbie Warner and I am running for the New Hampshire Senate

Burton: And Larry Edmond ... are you running? Heard you were running – anybody else running for anything? Dog catcher to the president – get it right out here. I'm the dog catcher category. (laughter) I would like at this time ask you to join me in a round of applause for John Gallus, and the years he has given to this county. (applause) Senator Gallus, Bob Lord and I agreed; we took this petition and we mailed it on to our US Senator Shaheen and Ayotte, Bass and Guinta, dated March 27<sup>th</sup> and what it ultimately lead to in my opinion is something that John Gallus and I communicated about 5 or 6 years ago to the federal people, there should be some kind of a committee – advisory committee or something so that it would allow the local people to interact with in this case a federal agency, federally regulated, federally funded. Another good example right here in the State of New Hampshire is the 800,000 acres we have in the White Mountain National Forest. Tom Radner the Supervisor has forest rangers throughout the 800,000 acres. They meet with the public officials. They listen to concerns. I'll give you another good example of how government can interact with people around the State of New Hampshire. And, that's the Department of Forest and Lands. And Brad Simpkins, the Director of Forest and Lands Department, is here. Another good example – the almost 8,000 miles of snowmobile trails, ATV trails, walking paths, that we have publicly funded from revenue from the users and to the credit of Chris Marsh and his staff throughout the state, they get along with our neighbors, if you will along the public trails, paths that we have. So, what this meeting has led to really is our communicating with our

congressional delegation and I can tell you they didn't sit around twisting their thumbs and wondering what to do, they immediately got in touch with their counterparts the Federal Department of Interior and we heard from a Terrance Carr who said yes – we should have some roundtable. We should have a roundtable right on this project, in this town, and in this valley. And to the credit of Kathy Eneguess and her people – all the people present that you know – like White Mountain Community College down the road here. The next roundtable open to the public 4 to 6, July 12<sup>th</sup> public roundtable to discuss Umbagog issues. Now, you may have a complicated one. You may have some testimony and writing that you'd like to bring. If it arrives up here with Senator Gallus and I, we're going to put it all in a packet and we're going to hand it to President Eneguess and that will create here agenda for public discussion in a publicly funded publically regulated project here in Coos County. So, that's where I believe we're at. And John, do you have anything – I know that you and I both got a letter from Mr. Aaron Shigar from the Fish and Wildlife Service, I think the acting or soon to become the Federal Wildlife Chief – Shican – Scott Kahan. He and his local manager, Paul Casey, regretted that they couldn't be here today but that's okay. This gives us a solid chance to vent out. Now speaking for myself – speaking for myself – I consider this meeting that I've done due diligence for this inquiry that came to my office and Senator Gallus. We moved to the proper point in our government here in this country for a response and I hope these roundtable meet. I certainly hope that whoever the appointing authority is, that some locally elected officials show up – like a county commissioner. A local state representative and anybody else – that wants to talk and have something to say. I will say for this meeting here, after John Gallus and I speak, I'm going to ask these federal people over here along with Senator Shaheen, Senator Ayotte, Congressman Bass, is now in their capable hands and I should say good and effective hands. I've known all three of them here for years. They are not going to sit around. They know the citizens have spoken and they are going to continue to speak and this is the way the whole government should operate. That you and I know and love and care for all these years. Senator Gallus....

Gallus: Thank you Councilor. It's always great to be here and I want to thank each and every one of you for coming. I know that taking time out of your busy weekend and I know it's a great fishing weekend so thank you for coming. We have all the people here when Ray and I sat down and talked to not only Bob Lord but a lot of other local folks with various issues that have happened here in the north country over the last few years, Ray and I have sat down from time to time with people from the Fish and Wildlife agency and had discussions over the years as you all have had. And, we've heard just so much recently that we felt that it was time to you know – have a meeting and call the parties together

that actually have something to say about this issue. As you know, Ray and I do like to sit down and talk to local people and find out what's going on on the ground. And Ray has done that exceedingly well over the years and I've tried to follow his example. I'm just listening and that's basically why he and I are here. We have no say over what happens at the Federal Wildlife Refuge but we have the people here who do have something important. We have their representatives on the ground and they will hear from you today and take those notes home with them. I would suggest that you know, when you speak today, that we all be very civil. We don't want anyone yelling from the back of the room. That means everybody. And we also want you to keep things brief. Try not to be repetitive. These folks were good enough to show up here today to listen to us and we have people from the Federal Wildlife refuge who are on the ground here today to listen and we all want to work together. We want this project to work for everybody. So that's basically why we are here today and we hope that at the end of the day we will accomplish something; these hearings will go forward with Kathy Eneguess having roundtables on a regular basis so that the local folks do have some input. About 5 years ago Ray and I did ask the local aide if we could have that advisory committee where local people would sit on the board and at least be able to contribute something into what is going on with the Refuge and lake acquisitions in the area. So that's all I really have to say. Ray and I are really here to listen as are the federal officials and we do want to hear from all of you. Thank you – now who is next? Oh ... this is the letter that Councilor Burton and I received from Scott Kahn who is the Regional Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System who plans on being here I think on the ground at the next roundtable. He couldn't be here this weekend but he is going to be here on July 12<sup>th</sup>. And he says .... Dear Councilor Burton: Thank you for your invitation to the June 23<sup>rd</sup> public meeting in Errol, NH. As you know, Paul Casey Refuge Manager and I have scheduling conflicts and regret that we are unable to attend. We understand that the purpose of the meeting is to listen to the concerns of the citizens regarding Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge and to record those concerns so that they can be discussed in detail during the series of roundtable meetings to be held starting on July 12<sup>th</sup>. The passion arising from these issues speaks volumes about the natural resources and recreational attributes of the area and how deeply your constituents value these resources. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to learning more about the concerns of the community and working with the community to address those concerns. We have heard that there are concerns and questions associated with land acquisition by the Service and I have arranged for Joseph McCauley, Regional Chief of Realty to attend and give a short presentation on our land acquisition process. Also attending from our regional offices will be Nancy McGarigal, Team Leader of our Planning Staff. Nancy will give a short presentation to summarize the

comprehensive conservation planning process for the Refuge that was completed in 2009. Ian Drew, Deputy Refuge Manager will also be in attendance representing the Refuge. We are aware of other issues that have been raised in the community and our purpose in attending the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting is to listen as we all are here for. We will be recording public comments to use as a basis for more detailed conversations during the upcoming roundtable meetings. Opening and maintaining communications with those who are interested in the future of the Refuge is vital to accomplishing our mission. The meeting on June 23<sup>rd</sup> and follow up roundtable meeting at White Mountain Community College will facilitate maintaining communication on many important management issues. We look forward to continued public dialogue through that process. Thank you again for convening the meeting and for your interest in Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge and of course it is signed by the regional chief, Scott Kahan. That basically is the letter from Scott.

Speaker: (inaudible) ... are those roundtable meetings are they going to be open to the public?

Speaker: Yes they are.

Speaker: And how will they be announced? How will we know when they happen?

Speaker: Well, they will be in the newspaper but we are also announcing today when the first one will be held on July 12<sup>th</sup> – what time Kathy?

Kathy: 4 to 6

Speaker: 4 to 6 at White Mountain Community College in Berlin. Okay. And there will be notice so that you'll .... And I hope that that dialogue can continue. I think that part of the problem has been and I hate to say this but probably there is a lack of a little bit of public relations on the part of the Wildlife Refuge as far as the give and take with the local community.

Speaker: And I would hope Kathy once complete one at the college, there will be some right here at the Town of Errol or other places.

Speaker: This time you guys got the feds.

Speaker: Introduce yourself and ....

Mike: My name is Mike\_\_\_\_\_. I am Senator Shaheen's State Director. I have a letter that I will read on behalf of Senator Shaheen by way of introduction; my previous position was Director of State Economic Development Division. I want to thank Councilor Burton, Senator Gallus and I also want to recognize your county commissioners who have been advocating and raising concerns for us with us for some time now on your behalf and I want to thank Kathy Eneguess. She is running an institution that has a large deal of challenges facing it and for her to take the time and step up and help coordinate this effort going forward we're really very, very grateful to you and we're committed to working with you on that. Chuck Anderson is here. He works for Senator Shaheen. He is located his office in Berlin and we're committed to working with our partner from the Congressional delegation to work as partners and try to improve things. So, I'm going to read this letter from Senator Shaheen and then we obviously for all intents helping questions and if we don't know the answer, we will follow up in writing. So thank you for your time in being here; it's an impressive turnout. Again ... Dear Senator Gallus and Councilor Burton: Thank you for your invitation to today's public meeting regarding Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge. I appreciate your efforts to organize this meeting which gives every state \_\_\_\_\_ to talk about the future of the Refuge. Lake Umbagog is one of the most important natural resources in our state and plays a key role in both the economic and environmental vitality in the North Country. The efforts to protect the Refuge reflects its significance to quality of life in the region. I would like to especially recognize and thank the residents of Errol of their past support of this work. During our April 5<sup>th</sup> Town Hall Meeting in Berlin it was clear that many residents in the north country have concerns with the direction of the Refuge and impact this may have on Errol, Gorham and other communities. Coos County elected officials and residents have also emphasized these concerns which include the Refuge Revenue Sharing Program, land acquisitions and access to the Refuge in meetings with members of my staff. I raised these and other concerns with Wendi Weber is the Northeast Regional Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service during my recent meeting with her on June 19<sup>th</sup>, I also noted the concerns the Town of Errol has with Refuge Revenue Sharing Program in a May 11<sup>th</sup> letter to US Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. It is my hope that these forums help to both address the concerns of the public and to insure that they are receiving accurate information about the management of the Refuge. We all agree that Lake Umbagog's incredible beauty adds to the way of life that they cherish in New Hampshire, and it's centrally economic vitality in North Country. Thank you

again for giving the residents in the region the opportunity to discuss these concerns. Sincerely, Jeanne Shaheen, United States Senator. Thank you.

Bud: Good afternoon; my name is Bud Fitch. I am the state rep for United States Representative Ayotte. I will extend my good thanks to all the officials that Mike recognized and save the time of going through them. I appreciate you taking your time to come out today. I'll introduce Mike Skala sitting there. Mike is the Senator's North Country Representative that works in her Berlin office and is available to you for any follow up you'd like to do on any federal concerns. Senator Ayotte also sent a letter and I'll take just a couple of moments and I'll read it. Dear Attendees of Councilor Burton and Senator Gallus of Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge Meeting. I regret that I am not able to join you all at today's meeting to discuss the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge. I appreciate both Councilor Burton and Senator Gallus' leadership and I'd like to thank the officials from the US Fish and Wildlife Service as well as all of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to attend and discuss this important matter. I understand that there are concerns around the Refuge that need to be discussed and brought to the attention of the Fish & Wildlife Service – that is why I and other members of the Congressional delegation urged the Fish and Wildlife Service to have senior level staff from their regional offices here today to hear firsthand your concerns and to discuss in more detail one of the main issues of concern – land acquisition by the Fish and Wildlife Service. I'd like to give you a brief update on the actions taken by my office in regard to the concerns brought to my attention by Mr. Lord's petition. On April 11, my state director as well as two other members of my staff met with Mr. Lord in the Berlin office. During that meeting we discussed in detail the petition. It was decided that members of the staff would spend equal time gathering information from the petitioners as well as the records and meetings that were held in May 16<sup>th</sup> with people here some of you in this very room. My staff has provided you with information from each of these meetings and I look forward to hearing any new information brought forward in today's meeting. My staff has informed me about the following issues: land acquisition process to be discussed today, the lack of local input on the operation of the Refuge, the Fish and Wildlife if they have a process, the availability of jobs to the local applicants, the Fish and Wildlife Service hunting restrictions that differ from state rules, the closing of the snow mobile trails, compensation to local governments to offset lost property and timber tax revenue through the National Wildlife Revenue Fund, harvesting of various berries by locals in further acquisition of land by the federal government. Outdoor recreation is vital to our nation's economy and integral to New Hampshire – hunting, fishing, camping, climbing, paddling, backpacking, mountain biking, wildlife



viewing and other activities contribute to the total of \$730 billion annually to our national economy and support 6.5 jobs representing about 8% of consumer spending overall. Please note that I am a strong supporter of recreational access to public lands when appropriate including motorized recreation. In our state we have a long history of land stewardship and of a balanced mixed use of our natural resources. I believe we can continue to preserve our state's natural environment with a common sense land use policies. Given the fiscal crisis and the need basis, Congress must carefully review our conservation policies and insure that taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely. I appreciate the need for conservation programs to help insure open spaces at the same time we need a responsible budget that significantly reduces federal spending and puts us on a path to reducing our trillion dollar plus deficits and our \$15.7 trillion national debt. I am hopeful that today's meeting will be productive for everyone involved. Again thank you for taking the time to be here today. As your Senator I consider your needs very important. I look forward to (coughing in background) from my staff and comments. Sincerely, Kelly Ayotte, US Senator. I can give people copies of this if anyone wants it.

Speaker: (inaudible) .... I will ditto the two other Senators and keep this brief. We're here to listen to your concerns and look forward to the rest of the day doing that so.... I'm going to be very brief (coughing).

Speaker: There is one other introduction – over to the \_\_\_\_\_ – he did send a representative – I think it's his brother, who is over there – if you've got anything you want to send to Mr. LaMontagne, there're going to be other campaigns (laughter) – make yourself known. The election season is on. And Bill Carpenter who is the head of ... yes, sir:

Speaker: To the gentleman who is the representative of Kelly Ayotte – correct? I would like to know the name and the number of the bill that she voted for to back roads funding of another project to go while – which side of the fence is she running on?

Speaker: Well I have an answer for that.

Speaker: Well I say come on (inaudible)

Speaker: If you'd like me to, I'd be happy to move the ball forward. We've responded quite briefly to you and if you'd like to give your name and address, the Senator would like to send you a response after we are done. The Senator voted is thus far for a broad national policy of a land-water conservation fund. The Senator, however, voted against the bill that you are referring to the final product – the transportation bill – because she believes that the bill contained too much spending that wasn't being paid for in a responsible manner. It had two years of spending paid for over 10 years. She believes that's part of the time spending that got us into this \$15.7 trillion debt and she believes that we have to a more responsible path. That means bringing in revenue and spend what revenue we have. We need to spend a lot less than what we are spending now for that process so she has voted in different ways along the way. Her most recent vote is a vote not to approve the current spending plan; give something to pass the Senate that has not yet passed the House, so the final version is yet to be determined down there in Congress. I appreciate an approximate answer; that's all the time I want to take today's from this meeting to do. I am happy to give you as much additional detail of records in the Senate as you like. At this point, would you like to start making your presentation – Fish and Wildlife Service – you have to go over the background of the conservation plan, you have a separate framework for input that we receive moving forward.

Speaker: I hesitate to take too much time because I see it is 12:30 already but my name is Nancy McGarigal and I was the planner involved in helping the Refuge develop their Comprehensive Conservation Plan which was approved in 2009. And that is a plan that they are operating under now. Many of you are familiar faces and were involved in part of that planning process. These Comprehensive Conservation Plans or CCP's are required by federal law and service policy to be done. They are being done on every Refuge across the country and they are meant to provide – they are 15 year strategic plan meant to provide direction and guidance through developing goals, objectives and strategies for all aspects of Refuge Management and in the case of Umbagog as it is with some of the other Refuge plans we are working on, we included the proposal and ultimately there was a decision for Refuge expansion. Again, that was done in a public process. I am sure some might argue about how detailed the public process was but we started working on that plan in 2001 and at that time we conducted some outreach. That's the first phase of our planning process is to begin to conduct outreach and host scoping sessions or public meetings to identify what issues and concerns are out there. We had a newsletter and an announcement that we are kicking off the process – we sent that out to 1,000 people. We had media releases, federal register notice, website – we hosted six public meetings at that

time to scope issues many of which are issues we are hearing about today. Then we began the process of deliberating on how to address those issues and developing those detailed management guidance for the refuge and we hosted a series of technical workshops and forums. I'd like to say that on core planning team we had state New Hampshire Fish and Game involved and Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife were integral to that planning process so over the course of a few years we were developing proposals for detailed management of the Refuge including the proposal for an expansion. We developed a draft plan that went out for public review and comments for I think it was about 77 days. We notified the media. It was in all the papers and we hosted – many of you attended that meeting as well. It was about almost the same size attendance there. We actually held two information sessions here in Errol and then we held a public hearing. So we had three meetings in Errol when the draft plan came out. I was just talking to Karen Brown about that. That's 2007 I think. So we went through a series of public meetings and requested input, comments on that draft plan, and we accepted comments, letters, emails, faxes. The oral testimony at these public hearings. We got 14,000 responses which is pretty notable for our region and for a project of this size. Yes sir...

Speaker: Not to interrupt you, but out of that 14,000 accepting your letters and emails, I was one of them. If you did use my email in your book about ....

Nancy: I did or did not?

Speaker: You did. Almost verbatim. (inaudible) The problem I have with that 14,000 people that emailed or faxed – 2,000 of them were from California. There was one from each state in the United States. We're only 300 in Errol. How can we go against 2,000 people in California? (applause)

Nancy: You didn't mention – we got some international comments too which was kind of interesting.

Speaker: Alaska.

Nancy: Alaska – I was think Germany. So, again, 14,000 comments. Now we attempted to respond to all of those comments and that was published in our final environmental impact statement and I have copies of this. I would be happy to share it with you. Many of you got it in the mail and it's

still available on line. It was Appendix O. where we summarize all those comments and indicate our response to them and how we were modifying our final proposal in light of what we heard. So I highly recommend you read that. You can see if you're interested. These are the issues that came up. In 2007 and you know – I thought we took a fair amount of time and I'm glad to hear that you felt like we addressed you know – it might not have – that we addressed your comment or that it was noted. Then we came out with a final proposal and that went out for another 30 day public comment period and in January 2009 – a decision was made by our regional director to adopt Alternative B with some modifications that we made between the draft plan and the final decision based on public comment. Again, yes, that decision in 2009 included the proposal to expand the Refuge and then we get into an implementation and monitoring and evaluation phase of the plan. It's only been in operation for 3 years now and again mandatory revision date is every 15 years. So, just to give you an idea of the timeframe we are working under, and then we're going to have Joe talk specifically about the land acquisition. Yes sir ...

Speaker: (inaudible) At the end of your 15 year plan. How much more property do you plan on buying in Errol?

Nancy: I can't say at this time. We're going to go through another (multiple speakers)

Speaker: There are\_\_\_\_\_ people that pay taxes. And the more you guys buy, the (loud background noises sounding like thunder) –

Nancy: Okay ...

Speaker: Thank you very much. What I asked your permission to do if we may, we have Mr. McCauley here – when he met with many of you earlier you raised a number of significant issues and as we discussed them with the leadership of the Fish and Wildlife Service with Councilor Burton, the Senator everybody agreed that there is no way we could cover all the issues that you have raised in a single meeting and take some of the scheduled availability – Mr. McCauley was the winner of the draw and is here today to talk about just one of the important questions that you presented to your Councilor, Senator and the delegation. I'd like to ask you to take a few minutes to make his presentation about the process and issues when property whether it is fee in total or whether it's an

easement is required by the Fish and Wildlife Service and then we will open the floor to questions at which point I'll ask you to direct them to the conveners of the meeting and to the extent you can, keep your comments about 3 minutes or so that as many of you as possible will have a chance. We'll come back around if we have time to make comments. A number of us are taking notes. I think it has been noted here that we are recording the meeting as well so that they go back and listen to each of your important questions and as the roundtable meetings happen that the White Mountains Community College are so kind to host for us – I think those will each get one or two topics as far as what their plan is and kind of – my phrase is – we need help to get it one bite at a time. You've raised a lot of concerns; I think we can take them one bite at a time. That said, with your permission, I'll ask Mr. McCauley to make his brief presentation before we take everything on \_\_\_\_\_.

McCauley: Thanks. Good afternoon everybody. Appreciate you taking time out of your weekend to share with us your concerns and because we're already well into the meeting and we haven't heard too much from you, I'm really going to keep it brief. The purpose of our being here is to listen to you all and so we don't want to take any more time than it is absolutely necessary. I might be stretching it a little bit to say I'm happy to be here; you know, this is a bit challenging for all of us here. We know there is a lot of emotion built up. I'd say that if there's one thing that we all have in common here, I'd say maybe most of us, it's an appreciation for this land. This is my first time here in Errol. I don't know any of you. You all don't know me at all. And I don't expect to stand up here and in 5 minutes or an hour and a half to change hearts and minds. You all have some very strong and valid concerns and we want to hear those, but .... And just maybe 5 minutes, I'll run through just a little bit of our process for how we go about acquiring property and talk a minute about revenue sharing. So we have an established boundary. So, I won't go into how that happens. That happened through the CCP process. We have an established boundary that we can work within. Our policy is to work with willing sells. So, we identify willing sellers either by going out, sending letters out, asking people if they are interested. The local Refuge folks have a role to play in helping us identify willing sellers and so once we understand that someone is interested, we'll send them a permission to appraise form which gives us the authority to go in and appraise their property. The way that works is there is a separate agency called the Office of Valuation Services. They do all the appraisal work for Departments of the Interior. That's Fish and Wildlife, Park Service, Bureau Land Management. They handle all the appraisal stuff. So once the willing seller is identified, gives us permission, we go to the Office of Valuation Services. They will develop a scope of work for the appraiser. They will go out and look for appraisers who are familiar with

the local market conditions and an appraiser has to be familiar with the Federal Standards for conducting appraisals. They have to have some special training in that way. Once we get the bids back or OVS gets the bids back, they will select an appraiser to do the work. Once that appraisal is conducted based on comparable sales in the local area, then that comes back to the Office of Valuation Services; they have review appraisers on their staff. So each and every appraisal is reviewed for consistency with the Federal Standards and to make sure everything was done appropriately. Once that value is determined, that's the offer that is given to Fish and Wildlife and that's the offer we make to the land owner. That's it. There is no negotiation from that point on. We are required by law to offer fair market value as determined by an appraiser. So that's the process for making an offer. We have two main sources of funding; the Land and Water Conservation Fund which is appropriated each year by Congress and the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund which is Duck Stamp Sales. So anyone who likes waterfowl buys duck stamps the proceeds from that go into purchasing lands for the Refuge system nationwide. So, we do our due diligence. We might have to do a survey. We get the title cleared. Contaminant survey. Once everything is all ready to go, we pay the landowner and we take title to the land. The process for an easement is very much like that except we'll work out the conditions of the easement ahead of time, give that to the appraiser so they understand what will be allowed on that property, what will be restricted by the easement and they do an appraisal as if that first process were in place, if it were highest and best use, and then they'll look at the conditions of the appraisal and they'll make an adjustment to the value and then we pay that value. So that's the way values are set. Now, I think I need to take on – head on – I think if we had to look at one major issue that's really caused a lot of concern for everybody and I can relate to this absolutely – is the revenue sharing issue. When the CCP was done, we had a history of revenue sharing payments that we could look at and at that time, right about that time that the CCP was being finalized, was kind of our lowest ever payment through the revenue sharing process. And so that's what the planners use to forecast the future. It was the absolute most conservative value we had at the time. And unfortunately, the payoffs have dropped since that time. It seemed like for a while Errol was getting actually more in revenue sharing payments than they would have gotten in tax revenue. Now you're getting less. And I can tell you this is a national issue. It's one that deeply concerns us because we understand that to continue to protect land for the Refuge system nationwide, this is going to affect communities all across the country and it is and we're hearing from those communities – regularly. Just like we're hearing from you. It's a real issue. It's not anything that we in the Fish and Wildlife Service have control over, but I would suggest that we make that a topic of one of the very earliest if not the first roundtable meeting; to bore down into this and see

what the actual impacts are to these municipalities. Let's see what we're talking about, because there are different ways you can look at tax revenue and I think the first thing that we all need to do is agree to what the real impact is and then let's talk about how we can maybe find solutions. It's – you know – it's a real issue for you guys and I know that very well and I can only say that we're prepared to bore down into it, find out what the actual dollars are that are missing I guess from tax revenue, and then take the discussion forward to see what we can do. I can't offer you anything else right now but that. So, in the interest of hearing from you all, I'm going to be quiet.

Speaker: Thank you very much. What I'd like to do is to just recap what Mr. McCauley here today is to invite you if you have questions about the property tax \_\_\_\_ process. If you'd lead off with questions and comments to the public on that point. He's the expert, and he should be able to answer.... Yes

Speaker: My suggestion would be better government. Since you can't pay your obligations now, stop buying land. It makes no sense. (applause) ....you can tell us you're having problems like tax revenue, at the same time you want to buy more land. So, the simple solution to your problems is ... don't buy any more land – sell some of the land that the government doesn't need. But – the reason you don't have enough money; the government doesn't have to pay for anything it does. The last thing they're going to pay for is the tax in Errol, New Hampshire (inaudible) so that's the solution that you should do. Forget about buying any more land and making the Refuge larger; you already know you can't afford what you've got now.

Speaker: Thank you – you had you hand up next.

Speaker: Just – the lady said – she thought that this was 2001 – why wasn't the Feds looking out for the interest of the loss of tax revenue for this project in 2001 and today. And you're saying going to a roundtable and start talking how you feel about the town of Errol losing tax revenue and so along with land ... you know, it should have been being planned in 2001 that the typical government thing where they put the cart before the horse and the people ... (applause)

Speaker: That's a very good point. I have one that's even better – in my opinion.

Speaker: Can you stand.

Speaker: The Towns of Errol, Upton are losing so much of their revenue we're not going to exist by the end of your CCP if you acquire the property that you say you're going to purchase. How about we get legislation that requires you to reimburse the town of 3,500 / 4,000 / 5,000 people – mandatory what you buy out of our state taxes. You know. Your Refuge management I don't want to say was \_\_\_\_\_ and everybody in this room or most everybody in this room (multiple speakers/clapping)....

Speaker: Sir

Speaker: I'm from Magalloway Planation, Maine so I don't know who any of you people are, but the problem is the same whether in Maine or in New Hampshire. And, I think you hit the thing on this revenue sharing. It's a big issue for us in Magalloway. One thing that is very strange....

Speaker: Could you speak up a little, please. People can't hear you.

Speaker: Oh, excuse me. One thing that is very strange in Magalloway is that if you look at the time leading up to the plan that you were forming; our revenue sharing was increasing. Since the plan was adopted, it has decreased significantly. Last year we got less than 50% of what we got before. So this is a major problem; one that needs to be solved and I think whether it is whether it's the way the program is being administered or whether it is the basic fundamental system that is being used and I think that's part of what you were talking about Fred in terms of having land purchasing money coming out of one pocket and this one coming out of the other; the two have got to be married somewhere together. So I hope you can take that back to try to get that done. It is a problem all over.

Speaker: Thank you. Somebody over here.

Speaker: Thank you. I'm Bing Judd, county commissioner also selectman in the unincorporated Township. My biggest concern is and you've talked about it is revenue. Every time you buy a piece of land, we lose it. We lose all the tax revenue. You buy a lot and there's a house or camp on it. We lose the tax revenue off it; you could find about a month after you bought it, and the burn down or removal



is over and it's leveled out; there's no more tax revenue. And what happens in the town of Wentworth location, we'll take that one – more than any of the other ones, it's down. The tax revenue is that town is going down because timbers off and we're going to lose it eventually entirely if that 5,000 acres in that location goes to the Refuge. They'll be no more taxes until the Federal government starts paying lower taxes – which they don't do. So I would hope that and I think you folks know along with the delegation that the county commissioners and the delegation – our delegation that oversees our budget and everything, have put in – if you had any land that had money from the Federal government to buy this land, the county could take that land. You can buy it for us. We'll keep it open. It will be open for fishing, hunting, trapping and we won't drive off the camp owners. They'll still have a place to stay. So I would hope that something could be done by the Congressman, congressional delegation to get the payment lower taxes coming back so as to help out the counties. Because the taxpayer is down in this county have to make up the difference. So I could go on for a long time about this cause I work in (inaudible) quite a lot. I also work in the county with the records; I know what the records are. I think they've got all they need. They don't need this 5,000 acre tract and Plum Creek as probably a lot of you know is in the process of subdividing another 4,000 acres (inaudible) down by the \_\_\_\_\_ Bridge. That'll be coming up for sale and who's going to buy it? Before anybody buys it with Federal money, I would hope they would come back to the county not through Umbagog Lake. I guess that's all...

Speaker: Thank you very much. Over here.

Speaker: Most people don't realize this (inaudible) – we're getting hit by counties also. All of a sudden a very small amount – and everybody goes well it's not that much. You know what? (inaudible) Now we're doing everything we can to pass this around, but (inaudible)

Speaker: Thank you – somebody over on this side – sir.

Speaker: Yes, we're from Maine – we represent Maine. The same ideas as you folks have here. Our tax process is a little bit different. But every single piece of property is purchased by the Refuge takes out of that tax base so you still have to have the same amount of money to operate the town, but now the increase has to go on the next taxpayer. Well each time one gets bought there's less. Eventually your tax base gets so high for your tax rate gets so high; people around the lakes and whatnot that have these camps that are – pay quite a bit of tax base, they lose interest in their camp

because they can't afford those taxes now they sell their land to the Refuge at a higher price than what they normally get from other people. It seems like no matter what kind of a price tag that's put on there, these appraisals are coming in a lot higher than what we assess the town at. And we've got properties there that are assessed at \$150,000 / \$160,000 that are being bought up for \$250,000 from the Refuge. Basically because they are the ones that have a bottomless offer, I guess I should say. It seems that way; maybe it isn't but that is what it seems like. So eventually what you're going to end up doing in the town of Upton – looking at your maps and what your acquisitions are going to be at the end of 15 years, we're going to have roughly a third of the town left. As Mike said, there is going to be no Upton because the taxes are going to be so high we can't afford to be there. I mean we have a small tax rate – amount that we have to share of like \$187,000. But we have a population of year round residents of 70 with camps and everything we send out about 200 tax bills a year. But we're losing those amounts of tax bills we can send out because of purchases being done – so unless something stops as far as it growing, as he said, we aren't going to exist and I believe Errol is going to be in the same situation.

Speaker: Thank you very much. Before we go on, have there been particular questions asked that you want to respond to now or in the future – but it is something to be heard at several of the earlier meetings is the difference between the town's assessed value for a piece of property and the appraisal that you work from and you can't buy it for more than the appraisal, but you're using recent similar sales to do that. Do want to respond all now or do you want to save that for some future ....

Speaker: Well I've lived in a lot of places in the last 30 years or so – I've moved around with my job and my experience is that assessments are sometimes pretty close to appraised value. And the way that they are done they're quite close. And in other times, I've had property that I've owned – raw land – that was assessed way under what I actually paid for it or what I would sell it for. So, sometimes there is a pretty close alignment between assessed and appraised; and other times, there is not – it really depends on the locality. So, I don't know how often the assessments ....

Speaker: We just ... town wide had a re-valuation last year and that's where we are at.

Speaker: Well again, to reiterate how the process works – the appraisers that we contract for, with – they are expected to go out and identify comparable sales – now you compare two properties – they are never going to be exactly the same – but that's the idea behind the whole appraisal process is

you go out and you look for recent sales of properties that are close and the way that they are laid out and they make adjustments for various improvements or lack of amenities and then they come up with an opinion of value. Is it a scientific, mathematical perfect process? No. But we hire people who have demonstrated that they're trained and they are professionals and they adhere to the standards and that's what we have to deal with.

Speaker: Thank you. Sir....

Speaker: I am Wayne Herstel Millsteel. In identifying comparable sales, do your appraisers exclude the purchases that you – the Federal Government – has made? Because from my perspective, you can easily manipulate the market if you're the biggest buyer around, then the market gets manipulated and the books get cooked – right?

Speaker: That's a really good point. And so – in a lot of areas – if you've got a lot of turnover in a particular area, it's relatively easy for the appraiser to go out and find comparable sales. They are instructed to avoid sales that we're involved in. Sometimes you've got nothing. You don't want to go 50 or 75 miles away to find a comparable sale, because sometimes they become less comparable. The further away you get from a local area, the less comparable it becomes. So they require – they're instructed to go out and search the private market. If they have to use a sale that we were a part of, then they have to make a disclaimer in the appraisal and make that well known to everybody – that's the way it works.

Speaker: Thank you.

Speaker: Somebody else – sir.

Speaker: One of the problems that I'm concerned about right now is every meeting since before the Refuge – there has been comment that people who attend the meetings – this building – and there never has been any clear record of – there are no minutes. There is no.... you can't go back and see the problems – the progress that has been made and I'm hoping that somebody has taken minutes (inaudible) at the roundtable – whatever – what has been said here. You've recorded ...

Speaker: So, we're in New Hampshire and this is a public meeting. So anyone who wants to can record this if you have a Smartphone, tape recorder, video recorder – record away on your own – that's your prerogative in New Hampshire in a public Town Meeting. The Fish and Wildlife Service is making an audio recording of this meeting...

Nancy: Let's make sure it's on (laughter) – Looks like it is on.

Speaker: Verified – they are making a recording of the meeting which my understanding is their intent is to go back and use that as they develop a plan to come back and interact with all of you at the upcoming roundtable meetings that will start on July 12<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. at the White Mountain Community College. We're taking notes here to go back to our respective members of the Congressional delegation. So that's the extent to which it is happening but you're all welcome to make your own record at whatever level you would like to. Sir over here.

Speaker: (inaudible) .... First of all Senator Shaheen – she never let us down as Governor and I don't she's going to let us down now. Second of all I'd like to say that I'm of the opinion that the more Federal government tries to protect land and people; the less the people to get to use the land. My opinion. (applause) As far as revenue sharing goes, you take a right – a left up here – go 6 feet and you're looking east on the road all the way up, you're going to see signs that say National Refuge – to me those signs say no trespassing. That's what they say to me. So you want some revenue sharing, save all the money you're spending on \_\_\_\_\_ and give some back to the towns. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. (applause) I'm going directly to you when we come back, but if it's not, I will certainly revisit, folks. Seeing no one here – the gentleman in the back.

Speaker: Rick Ryan. I have some property on Umbagog Lake on 26 at Upton. I think I'd like to express my point of view. I think – the year before – the Refuge existed, I participated in all the Refuge planning process. I was always a little skeptical. I always like to keep an eye on what is happening. I have great interest in the area. But I have to say that I seem to have had a different experience with the Refuge. Especially when I contacted with the previous owners of some of the properties – the logging companies. The logging companies never ask my opinion when they are going to log. They never ask my opinion nor managed the subcontractors who came in and walked my assets. In contrast the Refuge

has been very responsible. I know their phone number. I know who owns the land. There was a period there where the land was changing hands so fast I couldn't keep track of who owned it ... \_\_\_\_\_, James River, Boise Cascade .... So there's a criticism that has come out in the papers that the Refuge is not performing. My experience has been that they are reasonably responsible. It took me awhile to learn how things work. I expect things to happen very, very quickly and it didn't happen overnight. And part of this is because a lot of Refuge is tied to the Federal bureaucracy. Somethings literally require (inaudible) to have. So, I've complained about certain things that happened because there wasn't funding for it; it requires an Act of Congress. Over the years I have learned that's a frustration level...on the other hand, I called the Refuge manager, Paul Casey, and Ian Drew Assistant Refuge Manager. This guy here – had problems with beavers on the Refuge. They were making a dam – the roads Columbus and Jeffrey were being destroyed. This guy shows up the next morning – 6 o'clock – got his waders on. He's out there helping me cut out the beaver dam. Other situations I have complained about problems – there had been some construction out on the Potter farm mainly to preserve that – don't think there's going to be a museum; I don't think that is in the plans but anyhow, that construction process caused some damage to the road and I had a hard time getting out there – I had some friends coming over to visit on a motorcycle, it had rained; there were some deep holes – there was concern that he wasn't going to get through it. So I made a call – Paul Casey didn't have to be there but again he was there. Within two hours, those guys were no longer working on the museum that they were working on, they were working on the road – fixing the holes. So – to me that says that they are a good neighbor. And I have had a number of experiences relating to – like that – that says they are a good neighbor. It's a complicated system; it's not all Paul Casey's responsibility. And, I think it is very key that this group has picked out our primary issue that needs to be addressed. That's the one of taxation. There is much other ones – I think most of those are very, very small. It's great that they occur to keep people's interest; you have a tendency to keep people upset, I think. I think hunting is going to be a restriction. I think they're based on fallacy. I think snowmobile or ATV. My business is making maps for snowmobile purposes. So I've invested in many of these things. And while you're not a promoter of snowmobiling, I don't know of any trail that has been closed on my Refuge. They're not a great proponent of ATVing but recently (inaudible) allowed this very important trail to interconnect two systems. He has this whole bureaucracy. He has people out in California saying we don't like ATV's – you know. There'd be a lot less people around here, but I think that shows that you have to find a creative solution to get around that situation and open up a little third mile section – open up that very important opportunity for the town

(inaudible) so I'm a little concerned that he has been vilified in the press. Mostly by your state, Paul. And you know I think he has every right to speak up and ....

Speaker: Sir I would ask you to direct your comments to the panel up here. This is like a county meeting and not the right venue to have a debate back between people participating. We're getting much information so please just direct it up here. Thank you.

Speaker: (multiple speakers) I'm just saying the number one issue – business issue is taxation. We're talking peanuts in the scheme of things in terms of the Federal budget to meet its obligation. But it is important people here – I think that's – I don't want to pay \$10 more, it's not massive – the towns are hurting. That's the number one issue. I don't think we want to throw the baby out with the bathwater and say no more Refuge – let's not (inaudible). There's a minimal amount of space we need to have a viable population of wildlife – we've got moose there, I believe in that. I think it is a good thing. You have to look at the alternative. What's \_\_\_\_\_ going to do with some of this land? There are no longer logging towns; they are real estate investment companies. They have a fiduciary responsibility. They're management – to return the highest dollar for that. And what are they going to do? They're going to build camps, they're going to do a luxury resort like they are trying to do up at Moosehead Lake – 10 miles \_\_\_\_\_. It's going to be luxury homes and then it's going to be a gated community. Hunting will stop there. Snowmobiling except for people who have property will stop there; I'd rather have the devil I know than the devil I don't know. They can do whatever they want to (coughing in background) – The Refuge has a communication process. We know who they are. I think they are willing to talk. The second really great idea – open dialogue and have that process. I think that's wonderful. It is very important. I'll tell you then – Paul Casey shows up at the annual road committee meeting – very informal – he shows up every year. He gives a staff report and he goes out into the Refuge and talks about funding; he listens to our concerns and issues. It's not perfect; he doesn't solve everything. You know, he consults on the Federal deficit problem but (inaudible) but that's my two cents. Thank you very much and I would like to thank the delegation here for your fine work and I hope you continue on with the dialogue and let's work in a positive direction (inaudible) that's an incredible asset we have.

Speaker: Thank you sir. Ma'm... (applause)

Speaker: I maintain the tax records for the Town of Errol, and I would be more than happy to give (inaudible) copies of the sales that astronomically more than the town has it valued at. My second question when they decide the revenues, is that based on the land only when they compute....

Speaker: Yes

Speaker: I'd like to make a point. In the Town of Errol - the Refuge now owns 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the land; not only do they own a third of the land, they own close to a million at my last computation of values worth of buildings that are no longer on our tax roles. That does not include the ones that are burned and gone.

Speaker: I think that your position and the information that you have would be very valuable to have you or somehow participate in these roundtables and be a part of that discussion because you have the data; you have real figures that ... and that's what we need to base all this on, is real fact and figure. So, I implore you to please be a part of this continuing ...

Speaker: Just one other quick point ... the land that's being sold is huge acres of land and a lot of that is in current use which the tax base for that land is low to begin with. The number one concern, not just revenue mind you, is this (inaudible). And the Wildlife Refuge has been here I believe since 1991, they bought their first piece. I have never seen them log a piece of property from the Town of Errol. (applause) They did put in the newspaper, I think a week or so ago, that they were going to (inaudible – coughing in background) to log 950 cords of (inaudible). That's the first that I think anybody here ever heard about that. The first of anybody ever heard of any kind of a forestry (coughing) plan. I was a selectman for 14 years. I was on every meeting – that's the first I've ever heard of it.

Speaker: That's progress for you.

Speaker: (multiple speakers) – so let's try to keep calling on people; I'm going to call on people who haven't spoken before I go back to you – who haven't had a chance to speak. So sir, I don't think you've had a chance yet.

Speaker: My name is Rene Bouchard. I've been here for over 34 years and I grew up here. I think the homestead \_\_\_\_\_ knows who I am. Basically, I think everybody could say that we don't make six figures up here. I don't think that the Refuge realizes that people around here probably make \$30 or \$40,000 a year. And basically like Mark said over there, you're pushing us out. I've been living around here since I was a kid and in '07 (inaudible) I wanted to purchase property at Wentworth Location and there was one gentleman who I don't remember his name who said you don't want to buy that because the Refuge (coughing) and guess what? Five years later, I'm figuring out what I'm going to do with that property because I wanted to retire up there but doesn't look I'm going to be able to retire up there because taxes are going up. (inaudible) And I think everybody here has the same situation. I know there is another gentleman – he has the same problem. He can't afford his taxes anymore. He's (inaudible coughing) up for sale but the problem is is that just like the gentleman said in '07, oh, you don't want to buy that property up there because the Refuge is there. We're not going to have anybody up here buying properties other than the Refuge for whatever is on that tax base.

Speaker: Thank you sir. Ma'm over here.

Speaker: My name is Karen Brown. We have a camp in Wentworth Location for about 20 years and I understand in 2010 that we were – we came to all these meetings and they.... This was fiscal year 2005, the table in the plan shows that refuge revenues for the Town of Errol. In 2005, it was \$34,646. The next table shows for lease revenue from the lease of the camps on the Refuge land that year was \$30,248. So it appears to me that the lease revenue that the Refuge was getting was offsetting the payments to the Town and the Town was forgoing at that time 66% of the tax base on the land in the Town. Are you telling us that that's getting worse since '05 when the plan was written? Maybe we need to see the budget for the rent received. How much money (inaudible) boats, snowmobiles, how much money are you putting in for salaries? How much money is going to the part timers and maybe some of that money could be redirected for payments to the town of \_\_\_\_\_. Maybe make it budgetary priorities and to understand that Paul is going out and advocating for sales of (inaudible coughing). Perhaps we should advocating for money for the Town instead. And make .. these priorities need to change in terms of dollars and the way he wants to spend them. I know some of these are earmarks that are still ongoing. I found some of those on the \_\_\_\_\_ website the Town website. Some of those are still ongoing. So coming up with these dollar figures for our next roundtable might be effective to show everyone where the money is going. And why it's not coming to the selectmen in the



Town of Errol. Or other locations – please. They are taking every single house that on the right hand side of the road as you’re going north is being burnt to the ground. So, you’re taking the tax base and eliminating it right out of the town. It’s ridiculous. (inaudible) And a lot of these places are a 100 years old. (inaudible) the valuation is over \$117,000. It’s a shack that sits on the pier. This is insane. So anyway ... number, budgets – let’s take a look at that. And one other thing – these are roundtables – so I think to the Fish and Wildlife, there is something called a working group that has a lot of clout. There’s something called a working group that people like us sit on the board and help vote not just a roundtable. So I’d like to know the difference between that and how that works too. Maybe at the next meeting ..... thanks (applause).

Speaker: Gentleman in the far back, please.

Speaker: Thank you. I’m \_\_\_\_\_ from the Town of Errol. And I have a concern. And the concern is when Fish and Wildlife does their planning, and it looks like they’re involved, what do they see as their perfect refuge? How many thousand acres are in that refuge? The latest CCP allows you to grow about 75,000 acres. What is the perfect refuge that you see? I suppose in a nutshell, when is enough enough? Thank you.

Speaker: Gentleman in the far back over here.

Speaker: (multiple speakers) .... Let’s get the answer. What’s the answer?

Speaker: Sir – thank you for the question. I’m not sure that we have the right people in the room today to answer that question.

Multiple speakers: boo ....

Speaker: But we have – as the letter was read here the meeting was set and some of the people who are in the leadership had already committed to other things today so they were not able to attend. We heard the question loud and clear ...

Speaker: (inaudible) but we’d really like an answer.

Speaker: We told you that if we didn't have the answer we would get back to you right away and we will. (multiple speakers) – we have the meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> and that will be a helpful forum to continue the conversation – you know. It is not a yes or no question, I think that's the answer.

Speaker: (multiple speakers) The 12<sup>th</sup> – the meetings the 12<sup>th</sup>. 4:00 White Mountains Community College. Sir in the back.

Speaker: My name is Gary Busseau and I also live here in Errol. And my question is a segueway (multiple speakers in the background) into what Bill just asked and I do think the most relevant statement made here tonight by Mr. Kim when he said until you can figure out the boundary in the paper maybe we ought stop the buying of more land. I think that's the most relevant thing that we could leave this evening with and the most important message we could send forward – let's put a moratorium on buying more until we can evaluate where we are and then come up with all these roundtables. I mean you could have these roundtable (inaudible) – these roundtables are going to last a long time. You should at least stop buying land until that can be figured out. Secondly, I believe the original plan called for conversion of 25,000 acres. Before we even get close to purchasing 25,000 acres, we move that there's 75,000 acres in plan too. I think those are just approximate figures. We never had a chance to evaluate what the buying of 25,000 acres would do; and suddenly we are at 75,000 acres. And then I think the segueway onto Bill – I think the next land \_\_\_\_\_ to 150,000 acres and we still won't know where we are with the original 25 – so I think we really need to focus this message today on let's stop buying land 'til somebody can give us some answers. Thank you. (applause)

Speaker: Thank you sir. I don't think you in the back have spoken before.

Speaker: No I haven't. My name is Don Bouchard. And I want an answer. I want to (inaudible) the board don't have the information on facts what's it doing to our economy, timber, taxes, appraisals – it's clearly inconsistent. That's the figure that (inaudible) more people know; a moratorium on land purchases; any lands – until we get this figured out and solved. It's critical to this community and county. If you want take a quick second to thank Bob Lord for his effort to put this all together. I also want to say something about this. Some people in Washington may not know that here in New Hampshire our taxes come directly – 95% of our revenue comes from our property taxes. That doesn't

happen to all states in this country. That has to be brought to the EPA, Wildlife folks. That's our tax base. That hurts us. Schools, our children, our roads, and infrastructure – that earn is being taken down to taxpayer that can't handle it anymore. I think that's mostly what I wanted to say. I'm more concerned about what they have to say about the appraisals. When Coos County has the lowest county market going on right now and here basic appraisals and value to property – I think they are manipulating the market. That should stop. That's outrageous that you're doing that. You're controlling our housing market right now. That effects our taxes even more. Thank you for your time. (applause)

Speaker: I'm looking for new faces .... I think you haven't spoken before.

Speaker: Hi, my name is Don \_\_\_\_\_ - I live in Randolph, New Hampshire in Coos County. A couple of things in full disclosure. My family has a camp based on Lake Umbagog so I can appreciate the pressures that exist in the Refuge's philosophy of eliminating those camp leases. I can also share with you that during the working of creating the CCP, I don't believe any of those camp owners were notified of that process or asked to participate and therefore they really weren't conveyed in the standard that they should have been. I am also chairman of Randolph Community Forest. I worked with trusts for public lands in creating that forest. That's a 10,000 acre town forest; the largest forest in the Northeast. It is a working forest that provides jobs to folks in Coos County. It provides timber for the local forest products industry and provides the locals (cough). I am also a retired State Police Troop Commander and as such my area of responsibility also included all of Coos County. I have seen what has happened with a declining economy which adds the increase of alcohol abuse, domestic violence, general crime and (cough) despair amongst the local population when the families and communities are torn apart because they can't make a living on land. I'm also chairman of the Coos County Planning Board. And it is that board that is responsible for the land use decisions that occur in the unincorporated places in land that is subdivided. And many of the lands that are being considered for acquisition by the Refuge occur in unincorporated places. So, the only reason I bore you with all of that is that I talk to a lot of folks in the county and I hope that I have a good sense and understanding of what's some of their concerns are. I also feel I have a good understanding of what land conservation can accomplish. So....I have two feet both sides that are firmly planted on opposite sides of the fence. Um...from the conversations I have had it is clear to me that folks in the county do not feel that they have a say in what goes on in the Refuge. But more importantly, that during the writing of the current Refuge Plan that

they really were engaged and encouraged to participate in that process. Now whose fault that is – I don't have a clue, but that's the general feeling and I think that really needs to be appreciated. So therefore, I think there's a lot of folks around you that do not trust the results of that process and don't respect the plan that is currently written and I think that they don't feel that their voices have been heard or are currently being heard. And, I guess I have to agree with that assessment. So, here we are today. And yes emotions are high. How can we start the process of fixing this problem? To me the answer is a simple one and one that I think can be achieved and I believe that the CCP which was recently enacted in 2009, needs to be reopened and it needs to be reopened for the purpose of actively encouraging the residents of Coos County, New Hampshire, Oxford County in Maine as a truly (cough) joint effort to learn from all of these residents what their hopes, desires and management priorities are for the lands that currently make up the Refuge and for those lands that are currently within the proclamation boundaries or they don't call it that – or procurement boundaries – and whether those boundaries are reasonable as they are now drawn, when you look at the future economic well-being as a standard (inaudible) for the continuation of a viable timber based economy in Northern New Hampshire. Only if that is done in my opinion will there be a beginning to try to restore some trust between the residents who live here and the Federal partners and right now in some – some folks don't consider it a partnership – that's part of the problem. I guess I would say that I have expressed those views behind the scenes; the answer that has come back is it's a bureaucratic problem to (inaudible/coughing) the plan. I guess I am asking my senate and congressional delegation to please make that happen. I am convinced it can happen with the right persuasion from those that are elected officials. So, that's my suggestion on how to start the ball forward and maybe reinvigorating some trust and really getting to learn what the people in Coos and Oxford County think is the way to have some participation and designation for their future. On the county side, what we're going to do is – I'd like to take this opportunity - I think it is real important that the county residents of Coos have the opportunity to express their views not only on the Refuge conversation but also on land management and how our natural resources are to be managed in the future so, we're working with the University of New Hampshire and the county forester to set up some forums this fall. They will probably be similar in nature to this and really seeking out and encouraging local residents to say what are your priorities, what's important and based on those answers, how to best – what land ownership – how to best accomplish those goals. So, those will be announced going forward this fall. I ask everybody in this room to get the word out when you hear about them and come and participate. That being said, I think (inaudible). (applause).

Speaker: Thank you very much. One observation – I'm not sure you're going to find as nice a day as today in the Fall – people might get cold in the fall but we're nice and warm today. Now we are – I'm going to call on you folks in just a second – I'm just going to note that we're about five minutes from the end of the time that the councilor and senator set up for the meeting. And, I've been trained by councilor Burton when I worked for him, to state that we start a meeting on time and you end the meeting on time. So ... we'll try to get people who haven't had a chance to speak before; I know several of us are available on an ongoing basis and I'll turn it back to councilor and senator after the next couple of folks that we haven't heard from before.

Speaker: (inaudible) as stated before, how much land do they need. They start out with 25,000 then there is 75,000 – now – talking with a couple of reputable people, I learned that what they've done in Maine and they can do actually anytime, wipe out some of these small towns up here. And if they weren't going to change it by now; they're buying most of the \_\_\_\_\_ now and they're looking to wipe out these towns (inaudible) – (another speaker in background) –

Speaker: I would say absolutely not. There is no intent to do that.

Speaker: I mean a populated town in \_\_\_\_\_ they're looking to do – wipe out. (speakers in the background)

Speaker: Thank you very much. Sir, have you had a chance yet?

Speaker: I am scared – when we first had a meeting here – when the man from the Wildlife whose name was Drew – if I remember right – and he said that they would look at the Wildlife Reserve up here pertaining to around Umbagog Lake. He didn't say how far back that he was going to go. But he also said that there would not buy anything to go out and buy unless somebody came to them and offered them to buy. Right now, it is not so. All these people in camps, have their help because Wildlife wants to buy what they get \_\_\_\_\_. Wildlife will buy it (thunder in background) – the bucket of money to them is unlimited. To us, it is a few here who live in Coos County, they are live on a little God damn check – to have to pay what we pay (coughing) – new machinery, we have little ones, they've got big machinery and everything. We're the paupers down here; they're the rich ones. (applause)

Speaker: Thank you. We're out of ....

Speaker: Can I ask one quick question?

Speaker: Certainly.

Speaker: Can I ask why your roundtable meetings are going to be like 4 to 6 on a weekday. The people from Errol work – to 4, 5 6, 7 o'clock at night. (laughter) You know, personally I work 40 hour week plus I am a selectman, plus I'm trying to build my own home, plus, I also work a part time job. So, coming to a mid-week meeting, it's next to impossible. Saturday is fine.

Speaker: My expectation from the conversations that I have listened to of the folks that are organizing that is the goal is to make them accessible and easy. The people who established that time frame was let people get out of work, and go to the meeting ....

Speaker: It's an hour from here to Berlin.

Speaker: I think – Kathy – she's a volunteer. If folks want to come up with different times, I think give her some feedback of what works, mix it up, morning, day, evening –

Speaker: Mid-day – mid-morning? (multiple speakers)

Speaker: The point is this is a volunteer meeting – it's community based, so if you think there's a better time, I think Kathy is nodding her head saying, I'm listening. So...

Speaker: Kathy ... (multiple speakers) – and that is the pleasure of this company. We are open and we can do it. (multiple speakers)

Speaker: Thank you all for your attention. I think – many of you would like to talk again, but we have reached the end of the time and I think I'm obliged to turn it back to Councilor Burton. Thank you for your civility today.

Speaker: On behalf of Senator Gallus and all of us I would like to thank (talking in background) ...

Speaker: The gentleman who set up the meeting would like to ....

Speaker: I would like to – on behalf of Senator Gallus and all of us who assembled here today thank the Board of Selectmen, Mark if you would express our thanks to the Town. If anybody wants the name and address and phone number of the Congressional Delegation offices on this card right here, I remind you once again that the constitution of New Hampshire is available. Senator Gallus ...

Speaker: I would just like to thank Bob Lord for pestering me to make sure that we had a meeting, and sit down and have this conversation and let's hope that this goes forward and that can resolve this issue some other way. And, my predecessor has one thing to say and I will give him the floor ....

Speaker: I'm sorry if you guys have to go back to Manchester tonight. But I came here just to be heard ... and

Speaker: With all due respect... we're here – we're standing here ....

Speaker: Good for you

Multiple Speakers

Speaker: I've got some things that I would like comment on.

Speaker: We're staying....

Speaker: The first thing I would like to comment on .... Councilor Burton sine you're now the moderator...

Speaker: My count is that 21 people have now spoken here this afternoon and out of due respect to you, Fred, in your years of service – I think you'll catch the moment – make it short and sweet and to the point. So...

Speaker: Well first thing I want to say to the assembly here tonight – that you must know the county commissioners wrote a letter to the Federal delegation and their letter simply said this: we want a moratorium on any more purchase of land by the Federal Government in the Refuge. Their response was not the greatest; they did get a response. So the commissioners took a position on that. Just stop buying land. You know – as I said earlier, this gentleman tells me all the problems they had paying the bills, but they want to buy more land. I have a problem with the 2008 Refuge Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan Environmental Impact Statement 2008. And they had 3 proposals: one was the continue to acquire from willing sellers (inaudible) years later, adding to the current 21,650 acres. Alternate B – to add 47,000 acres. Alternate C would be to add 74,000 which would make it 100,000 acre Fish and Wildlife Refuge. It has nothing to do about bringing tourists here; tourists will come because you can bike up here in the Refuge. They can get lost in Massachusetts on 100 acres. (laughter) 100,000 acres. So I would like to before we go have a show of hands in the assembly here to think – the first thing we should do is tell Federal government to stop buying any more land so that we can have time to figure out to pay for what we've got. (applause)

Speaker: Out of respect for my good friend, Senator King – I will ask that question to the group, you know. How many people would like to see a moratorium on Federal purchases until we get our act together? Thank you. How many oppose?

Speaker: There are a few that oppose, but overwhelmingly, you would like to see a moratorium and we thank you for that, and I thank everyone for coming today. We'd like to continue to make sure that everybody gets to speak but we did put ourselves into a position of making sure we get to our next appointment.

Speaker: Senator – just one little thing I'd like to ...

Speaker: You've got to take me fishing afterwards.



Speaker: If you're going to hold any more meetings, the problem is up here not in Berlin or Concord. And, I would hope you would keep on holding meetings in Errol. (applause) You guys want to say....

Speaker: We're available to answer questions ....

Speaker: Senator Gallus. Councilor Burton – this question is for the two of you. Our constitution book doesn't state in the government in the executive board how the problem the moratorium against the feds on their own state plan.

Speaker: Well speaking for myself we could pass a resolution – I can't guarantee how my associate councilors would vote and what the governor's reaction would be, but certainly based on the show of hands here, there is overwhelming support – let's go back – let things settle down. Have some roundtables and make the most of what we've already got and we know our government is in trouble; at all levels. People have been tapped out; tax wise since they started repaying state government, but yet people want services, transportation, protection of law enforcement, and all those health and human services – so, the challenging time – obviously I love it and welcome it and thank you all very much for coming.

Speaker: Bob, can I say something?

Speaker: Make it short now....

Speaker: Yes I will be. This has nothing to do about the Refuge. There is an election coming up this November. Be careful how you vote. Also, that man right over there – Ray Burton – okay – if you have any common sense at all, vote for him again. He has backed us 100% since the 70s. He's had an issue with this. Okay. He's backed us 100%. I'm awful sad to see John Gallus disappearing, but I understand. I hope he runs for national office but ...

Speaker: And, I'm supporting Ray Burton, too. (applause)

Speaker: Do you want to spend another hour?

Speaker: I think we'll remain available for people; I think people should feel free to leave or come up and speak with us however you'd like to.

Speaker: Thank you all. (background / people leaving / multiple speakers)

END OF MEETING

Transcribed By

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